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The Devil Figure in Goethe, Boito, and Gounod

Shuang Yang
Bard College

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**The Devil Figure in Goethe, Boito,
and Gounod**

Senior Project submitted to
The Division of Languages and Literature
of Bard College

By
Shuang Yang

Annandale on Hudson, NY
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Introduction

The author of *Faust* (1833), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, was a German writer and thinker who lived from 1749-1832. Besides lyric poetry, epics, novels, dramas, literary and aesthetic criticism, he also wrote scientific works. His most famous works are the novels *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, the poem *Prometheus* and the play *Faust*.

In fact, Faust was a real man. He was a magician who traveled and performed in Germany in the 16th century. Goethe took this legendary character as a suggestion and began to write this poetic drama in 1770. He finally completed *Faust* in 1832 and it spanned about 62 years of his life time. Soon after Goethe completed *Faust*, he passed away. So *Faust* was Goethe's last master piece and it truly is his most famous and important work.

The drama is named after the protagonist Faust. He is a scholar who is frustrated with his academic life and dissatisfied with his life of experience. The drama is divided into two parts. The first part has a Prologue: the devil Mephistopheles has a bet with a divine power called "Lord" or "Herr" that Faust is bound to be tempted. The main plot of the first part is the love between the rejuvenated Faust and the young girl Margaret. The second part has two main stories. In the first, Faust is under Mephistopheles' control and falls in love and has a child with the historically famous beauty Helen of Troy. The second story is probably the most important part of the drama because Faust wants to create a social utopia and starts to resist the temptation of Mephistopheles. After he

dies, Mephistopheles attempts to seize Faust's soul, but Faust is still saved. The Faust legend has been recreated in many literary, artistic, cinematic, and musical works over the world.

Charles Gounod's *Faust*

Gounod was a famous French composer in the nineteenth century. He was born in Paris and he is a gift to the world of music. He composed many stunning pieces and one of his most famous operas is *Faust*. This opera brought him the reputation of being the first French opera composer who had the best skills to combine music, theater, text, and have it performed.

Gounod read Goethe's *Faust* in French when he studied music in Rome. The story of ordinary people being seduced by evil attracted him a lot, as did the image of Margarete. So in 1842, he composed a requiem, and in this requiem we can hear the musical elements of Margarete praying to God in the Church from his opera titled *Faust*. In 1846, Gounod watched the debut of Berlioz's *La damnation de Faust*; even though it was not performed in opera form, it still impacted Gounod a lot.

In 1856, Gounod watched a drama named *Faust et Marguerite* composed by Michel Carre. He found that it is possible to set Goethe's *Faust* in opera. Introduced by their mutual friends, Gounod met Jules Barbier, who wrote the libretto for Michel Carre. Jules Barbier had already finished the opera libretto for *Faust* but had trouble finding a composer. Because Gounod needed a librettist to make his Faust opera dream come true and Barbier needed a composer to compose the music for his completed Faust libretto,

they quickly became great partners and finished the opera in a relatively short period of time. After difficulties to perform it in the Paris Opera Hall, because the Hall rejected *Faust* for “not being showy enough,”¹ Gounod changed a lot in his opera. On March 19th, 1859, Gounod’s *Faust* finally debuted. The reactions to the opera were on opposite sides. The music was extremely beautiful and people really liked it, but the scholars thought that this opera subverted the holy position of Goethe’s *Faust*.

After its debut, Gounod’s *Faust* was performed 57 times in the first year, and it became a huge success. After the first year however, there was no news about it for two long years. But in 1862, Gounod’s *Faust* came out again and grew more and more popular, strengthening the position of the opera as one of the most famous works of Gounod’s.

Gounod’s *Faust* is an opera in 5 acts. It only uses the first part of Goethe’s *Faust*. The story between Faust and Mephistopheles colors the whole opera. They are at the heart of this opera without a doubt. Even though the opera is called *Faust*, upon closer scrutiny, it is Mephistopheles who is the real protagonist of this opera. Gounod uses his music and his personal understanding of Mephistopheles to present a different devil from the one in Goethe’s *Faust*.

Arrigo Boito’s *Mefistofele*

Arrigo Boito was an Italian poet, journalist, novelist, librettist and composer. He wrote very little music and he is best known as a librettist. In 1868, he completed his

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faust_%28opera%29

masterpiece *Mefistofele*. This is the only complete opera written by Arrigo Boito. I think it is interesting that he was an atheist and indeed there is no god, just as in Goethe's *Faust*, except for the very end when Faust goes back to Bible and hold it in his hand saying "the Gospel is my bastion!"² The closest to Goethe's divine power is the angel chorus in Boito's *Mefistofele*.

Mefistofele is a work that has been performed regularly today. Moreover, the arias in this opera are so popular that many singers select them to record. The Prologue to the opera is also a favorite concert excerpt has been used for auditions a lot today. *Mefistofele* is an opera that contains a prologue, four acts and an epilogue. This opera was given its premiere at La Scala, Milan on the 5th of March in 1868 and was conducted by Boito himself. Similarly to Gounod's *Faust* being rejected by the opera house, *Mefistofele* was badly received by the audience and was withdrawn by Boito after two performances. The reason was its supposed "Wagnerism" – "an attachment, sometimes fanatical, to the music of Wagner,"³ even though Boito tried to maximize the "Wagnerism" in his opera. In terms of music, *Mefistofele* was a strange piece. After Boito withdrew the piece, he started to rework it. He made large cuts in the first final draft and also changed Faust from a baritone to a tenor. After he finished, *Mefistofele* had its second premiere in Bologna on the 10th of April in 1875, which was well accepted by its audience and gained even more success.

Mephistopheles is the devil figure in Goethe's *Faust*. The "always willing evil,

² *Mefistofele*, Arrigo Boito (1843-1918), EMI Records Ltd., 1997, Pg. 82.

All subsequent citations of the libretto are from this edition, with BL and the page number.

³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wagnerism>

always produces good”⁴ character fascinated me a lot. It is different from my view that devils only do evil things, and a “good thing” is never the result of the devil’s action. In this project, I will compare Mephistopheles in Goethe’s *Faust* with the devil figures in Gounod’s *Faust* and Boito’s *Mefistofele*. It is interesting how they named their operas. In my opinion, Faust and Mephistopheles actually both have very important roles in this drama, I couldn’t even tell if Faust is more important or not. I’m curious why Boito names his opera after the devil, whether he is just fascinated by the devil figure like I am, or whether he thinks that Mephistopheles is actually the protagonist of this drama. We will see it more clearly at the end of my project.

What follow is a comparative analysis of crucial scenes from the three works, beginning with the pact scene.

⁴ Faust 1 & 2, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Princeton, 2014, Line 1336.
All subsequent citations are from this edition, indicating the lines in the drama.

Chapter One

The Pact

The devil takes the first step to win his bet for Faust's soul with the Lord: this scene is called *The Pact*. In Boito, The scene of the pact between Mefistofele and Faust interests me a lot, not only the music, but also the libretto. At the beginning, Faust sings an aria about his listlessness. It has a soulful musical line in g minor. Boito stretches all the notes and expresses Faust's emotion well. It is beautiful but sad. We can feel Faust's sorrows and his pitiful opinion of his life through the music and also in the libretto: "From the fields and meadows now immersed in night, from the quiet paths I return, filled with peace, profound calm and holy mystery. My heart's grim passions slumber in calm oblivion, I am inspired only by love of man, love of God" (BL, 31)! His passion is gone and there is nothing but peace in his heart. The earth has been covered by darkness. It also applies sadness to the atmosphere. Faust has not much passion but inner peace. It might indicate his hopelessness.

But this peace is broken by a howl from Mefistofele who is dressed as a friar, and the music suddenly turns to horror. The violins' tremolo creates a nervous feeling in the air, and then the half steps show up in the lower strings' part: this motif signifies danger and Boito uses this motif a lot. In Faust's singing line, there are many rests unevenly interspersed. They represent that he is breathing jaggedly due to panic. He is pretty afraid when he sees the friar get close to him, because he senses that this friar is from a

dubious realm. This shows in the previous scene. When Faust's student Wagner and Faust see this strange friar on the street, Faust is curious who this guy is, because he looks different to him. His curiosity leads him to chase after the friar: he wants to figure out the answer. Then he is in panic because he sees something devilish: "Look closely. He moves in tortuous spirals and is coming slowly towards us. Oh, if I'm not mistaken he is leaving fiery footprints in the soil" (BL, 29)! Faust is attracted by the unusual way Mefistofele walks and Faust sees the fire in Mefistofele's foot print. It horrifies him, because the fire symbolizes destruction, and it is mostly associated with hell, as for instance in the Bible: "Matthew 25:41 - Then he will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.'" ⁵ Faust knows the Bible well and he must understand where this strange friar comes from. But he doesn't know why the devil is showing himself to him. He is scared. He might think that something bad will happen to him. But the funny thing is that his student sees nothing and he keeps comforting Faust in happy mood that it is just a phantom of Faust's mind. Like in Goethe's text, Faust notices a black puddle, which looks different to him, but Wagner thinks that is just a dog: "Faust: Do you notice how it races around us in a great spiral, getting closer and closer? And unless I'm mistaken, an eddy of fire follows closely wherever it goes. Wagner: A mere black pooddle I see - you, I suspect, some optical illusion... Faust: The circle is narrowing, the dog's close at hand! Wagner: You see a dog, there is no spectre there..." (1152-1165). Wagner thinks that is just a normal black dog and what it does is all just what dogs do.

⁵. <http://bible.knowing-jesus.com/topics/Fire-Of-Hell>

There is nothing special about this dog. It is a wonderful passage in Boito's opera. Cellos and Basses are playing with Faust in half steps, the music line firstly goes forward and back in a rondo then gradually goes to a climax in ascend music line with Brasses' fanfare, sounds horror and frightening. But Wagner's music is in whole steps with flutes' shorts and jumping notes. It sounds lively and innocent. The sharp contrast between their music presents distinct differences in their moods. When we look through the libretto, it presents their difference of wisdom; Faust has been learning his whole life and is very wise, and he knows a lot, where as Wagner is young and simple. This scene shows why Faust is scared when he sees this friar again when he is alone in his room.

Then Mefistofele takes off his priest's frock and shows himself to Faust: "I am yours to command, sir" (BL, 32). When he says this, the music in the background is the same instrumental and rhythmic form as his first appearance in this opera⁶ (BS, 81). This reminds or consolidates for the audience Mefistofele's character. Faust's music becomes relaxed, because he doesn't see anything threatening and Mefistofeles' true body doesn't seem to terrify him. But Faust still asks him what is his true name and identity. "Mefistofele: A living part of that power which perpetually thinks Evil and does Good" (BL, 33). In his answer, Mefistofele uses a dark and deep voice to sing, as if it is from another world under the earth. He sings so slow that it makes me feel he takes this self-introduction seriously and he wants to make sure Faust hears it clearly. But obviously, Faust is confused, so he asks Mefistofele further about the meaning of his

⁶ Mefistofeles, Arrigo Boito, G. RICORDI & CO., 265, Regent Street - LONDON. W. Pg. 81.
All subsequent citations of Boito's score are from this edition, with BS and page number

words. This leads to the second Aria of Mefistofele, but we will talk about it later, because I want to finish talking about the relationship between Mefistofele and Faust.

Mefistofele convinces Faust that he could be Faust's friend, slave, or servant as Faust wishes. Faust seems interested in that and asks Mefistofele: "And in return what conditions must I observe" (BL, 35)? Mefistofele thinks they do not need to rush to talk about that, but Faust seems anxious, and he says he really needs to know the conditions right now. His eagerness shows that Faust is eager to have Mefistofele add some magic to his life, to explore more wonderful things in the world. If the condition is not that hard to fulfill, he will soon agree to the pact. It shows his clear thinking and wisdom indirectly but obviously. This is distinctly different from Gounod's *Faust*. In Gounod, Faust seems defensive at Mephistopheles' first appearance: "Mephistopheles: ...Well, doctor, what you want with me? Come now, speak, are you afraid of me? Faust: No! Mephistopheles: Do you doubt my power? Faust: Perhaps I do! Go away" (GL, I, 3)!⁷ Faust seems defensive that he doesn't want Mephistopheles badger with him. He tries to kick Mephistopheles away. However in Boito's opera, Faust does not seem averse to talk with this devil, and what's more, he shows interest in signing the contract with Mefistofele. "Faust: Give me the contract! Mefistofele: Here! (*They shake hands*)" (BL, 36). Faust's attitude is close to Goethe but a little different: "Mephistopheles: ...I'll gladly place myself at your disposal here and now. I will be your servant and your slave! Faust: And in return for this, what am I to do? Mephisto.: You've lots of time until that needs to be considered. Faust: Oh, no! The devil is an egoist and is not apt, for love of God,

⁷ "Faust" by Charles Gounod libretto (English), Mursahev.com, 2012-2016

All subsequent citations of libretto are from this edition, with GL, Act number and page number in each Act

to offer anyone assistance...” (1627-1706). In Goethe, Faust seems more clever and calm that he knows Mephistopheles has his purpose to offer him this kind of “service,” and because of that he doesn’t want to be fooled, he wants to know more clearly what he needs to do in return before he agrees to the pact with Mephistopheles. In Boito, after Faust and Mefistofele shake hands, Mefistofele seems really excited and starts a song in G major with energetic rhythms. Then Faust joins him to sing a duet: “From tonight in the greedy orgies of his/my master” (BL, 36). It looks like they are both really happy to sign the contract and the duet represents their friendship. They also show their excitement in their music when they sing alternatively. The phrase ascends gradually by steps and rushes to a climax. This duet is wonderful because it shows the harmony and disharmony between the two characters at the same time. Superficially, they both look cheerful, but they are amused by different things. Mefistofele is amused by his successful first step in winning his bet with the Lord. Faust is excited by the start of his new life. He is excited at this moment and full of hope, like a kid whose mother has promised to bring him out to a new amusement park to have fun pretty soon. Their friendship also can be found in Goethe’s *Faust*:

“Mephistopheles: We’ll really have to give some thought to this; let’s talk about it more at our next meetings. May I assume that I am now excused? Faust: I don’t see why you ask permission... Mephistopheles: There’s a confession I must take. A little obstacle prevents my walking out: the incubus-foot on the sill of your door! Faust: You are distressed by the pentagram? ... You Son of Hell ...” (1385-1399).

They met twice in the book. In as early as their first talk, Faust even makes fun of Mephistopheles like an old friend. He laughs at Mephistopheles’ limitation that he can’t pass by a small pentagram even though he is the most powerful person in hell.

Laughing at one's shortcomings is the thing that only close friends do.

However, Mephistopheles has a harder time working out the contract with Faust in Gounod's *Faust*. Faust is afraid or does not feel ready to sign this "Life and Death contract" (GL, I, 5). In order to persuade Faust to sign, Mephistopheles shows him a picture of Marguerite to seduce him. Obviously, this works well. Faust is eager to see this lady and soon signs the contract (GL, I, 5). In this case, Faust appears to have been fooled, a victim of Mephistopheles. His purpose to have youth again is more on the sexual side in Gounod's *Faust* but not on the pursuing of knowledge like in Boito's opera and Goethe's text. But in Boito's opera, both Mefistofele and Faust know what they want in this contract. Since they both benefit from this pact, their statuses look more even, more like their relationship in Goethe's text. Therefore, Boito's characters are designed closer to Goethe's text than Gounod's opera.

Having analyzed the relationship between Mephistopheles and Faust in the three works, we can look closer at Mefistofele's character in Boito's opera.

The leading musical phrase of Mefistofele's aria is short and violent. What makes this entrance music unique is that it descends instead of ascending as usual leading music (BS, 82). Then he introduces himself with a deep voice and descending half steps (the danger motif) with long notes: "I am the spirit who denies everything always; the stars, the flowers. My sneering and my hostility disturb the Creator's leisure. I want nothingness and the universal ruin of Creation..." (BL, 33). Combining the music with the libretto, we see a distinct devil that denies all beautiful things, such as stars and flowers, and he likes to disturb the Lord's spare time. When he sings about

destruction, he seems really happy, because his rhythm gets faster. Also in the accompaniment, the orchestra plays shorter notes, sounding lovely but also crafty. This passage shows a naughty side of Mefistofele, that he is mischievous and he likes to destroy things. Then he says: “My vital atmosphere is what is called Sin...” (BL, 33). He repeats the word Sin here in cannon with the orchestra’s accents. The repetition represents his deep love of Sin. “I laugh and snarl this monosyllable: “No” I destroy, I tempt, I roar, I hiss: “No” I bite, I ensnare, I destroy, tempt, roar, hiss, I whistle, whistle, whistle, whistle! (*Placing two fingers between his lips, he whistle piercingly*)” (BL, 33). He keeps repeating “No” in this passage and it enhances the evilness of his character a lot. What is special here is that he actually whistles. In the score, Boito has clearly asked for a poignant whistle. It is quite unusual. Whistling makes people feel uncomfortable, because it is always being used to provoke someone, or calling after a pet dog back. For example, when people whistle on the street, it always means someone is disturbing someone else. Whistling brings a flighty, arrogant, and aggressive character to Mefistofele. Moreover, there is an interesting passage about whistling in the Bible: “Isaiah 5:26. And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly.” The commentary on this passage reads:

“And he will lift up an ensign – That decree of the divine severity, which had been spoken of in general in Isaiah 5:24 is here explained: particularly God is shewn to be the supreme general or leader of the people which were to come from far to execute to his vengeance; they were to assemble at his setting up his ensign as a signal, and at his hissing, ~ a metaphor taken from bees, (see on chap. Isaiah 7:18.) which by hissing, whistling, or some sound of that kind, used to be drawn out of their hives,

as Bochart has fully shewn.”⁸

God uses the whistle to call or gather his people. So another possible meaning of Mefistofele's whistle here is that he wants to be “the leader of Faust.” He calls him like God calls bees: he wants to call Faust out of his hive made of books, and make Faust follow him to explore more exciting things.

Compared to Gounod's *Faust*, Boito is more specific and more detailed in the libretto to emphasize Mefistofele's character for the audience. Mephistopheles' appearance in Gounod is more cursory but we clearly know he is the devil and he seduces Faust to sign the contract with him. We can't clearly understand what his character is at the beginning of the opera. But in the appearance of Mefistofele in Boito's opera, we can understand that he is not a spirit of creation at all, and the only thing he does is destroy.

In this Pact scene, we have learned the differences between Faust and Mephistopheles' relationship in the three works, and the differences in the character of Mephistopheles. We are now moving to the next scene called the Garden.

⁸ <https://www.studyight.org/commentary/isaiah/5-26.html>

The Garden

In Boito's *Mefistofele*, this is the only happy scene of Margherita that she meets Faust in the Garden and enjoys the love. When people refer to Love, first thing came out of mind must be sweet, happy and beautiful. So does Boito.

The scene starts in C major key with strings' melodious and sweet characteristics sounding in legato. I'd like to say it is mysterious rather than beautiful. First of all, the strings play really soft and the score marked *tranquillo e legatissimo* (BS, 97). This gives different feeling of loud sound. Imagine of this beginning is in forte: the very open and beautiful opening must bring us to an ebullient mood. We can feel the happiness for sure but it might be too straight forward. So I think Boito composed it well, not only the volume, but also the music. He puts some stops in-between strings music line, makes music not going smoothly. The first two little sentence goes up step by step, and the third sentence repeat the first two sentences but without stop and goes up more with a little crescendo. It indicates Margherita's implicit emotion. The going up music line shows her curious that whether Faust loves her or not, and the stops indicate her hesitation because she is a shy girl. But the thing we know for sure is love is growing in her. After these legato sentences, strings play staccato in even rhythm and the score marks *leggierissimo*. The double stops staccato could be the heart beats of Margherita and Faust. The raised heart beats in the music indicates they are both into each other. It sounds beautiful but implicit, like a shy love flower is blooming and it is so fresh and

delicate. This reminds me the petal plucking scene in Goethe:

“Faust: Sweet love! Margarete: Let me do this! Picking a daisy, Margarete plucks its petals one by one... She pulls off petals, murmuring. Faust: What are you murmuring? Margarete (half loud): He loves me – loves me not. Faust: That lovely, that angelic face! Margarete (continuing): Loves me – not – loves me – not – (Elated, she plucks the last petal.) He loves me!...” (3179- 3193).

She is unsure whether Faust loves her or not, so she plays petal plucking game to try to figure it out. Gounod stages this scene in his opera: “Marguerite: ...Pray allow me... *She plucks a daisy* Faust: What is all this? Marguerite: A childish game! Please, allow me! Faust: What are your lips whispering? Marguerite: *plucking the daisy* Loves me! Loves me not! Loves me! Not! Loves me! Not! Loves me!...” (GL, III, 14). Gounod uses violin and flute’s characteristic sounding and their nifty music melody in 16th notes to present Marguerite’s childlike innocent and restless emotion. Compare to Gounod’s opera, I prefer Boito’s opera that he skillfully composes Margherita’s unsure feeling in the music. It brings me more fun to listen. It is a nice and wonderful beginning.

The Garden scene in Boito combines two scenes from Goethe: A Garden and Martha’s Garden. The music lines of Margherita and Faust are lyrical and the libretto is quite following Goethe. “Margherita: Wise and illustrious sir how ever can a village maiden attract you with her peasant talk? Faust: From those ruby lips you speak words that are divine. Say on, say on... Margherita: Oh, do not kiss this rough hand of mine. No, no, no, sir” (BL, 38). We could clearly find clue in the Garden scene from Goethe: “Margarete: ...I know only too well that my poor conversation can’t entertain someone

with your experience. Faust: One look or word from you is far more entertaining than all the wisdom of this world. Margarete: Oh, don't! You really shouldn't! How can you bear to kiss it? My hand is so ugly, it is so rough..." (3073-3084). Also Martha and Mefistofeles' libretto are almost verbatim taken from Goethe that Mefistofele says he doesn't know what is love and Martha tries to hook him up: "Martha: Really! And you have'nt fallen into the trap yet? Mefistofele: Believe me, I don't know what love is. Martha: So you've never felt the burning need for a heart-throb or an enchanting dream?... Mefistofele: Believe me, I don't know what love is... a good wife is a rarity, by my sooth" (BL, 40-45). In Goethe, we read: "...Martha: Speak plainly, sir! Haven't you yet found anything? Is there no romantic attachment anywhere? Mephistopheles: The proverb says: a home of one's own, a virtuous woman, are as precious as gold and pearls" (3149-3162). In the opera, Martha seems excited to hear Mefistofele haven't loved anyone yet. She always sings "Ha! Ha! Ha!" when Mefistofele sings he has no faith in love yet (BL, 39-41). It looks like she is found a good prey to catch.

Moreover, the music of these two couples sounds typical and different too. Faust and Margherita's rhythms are even and long. When you look at the score, you could see the rhythms are more in the strict form, looks more inflexible and serious (BS, 98). Their music is melodious and they both sing almost the same music, like they have the same feeling of each other and they echoes each other (BS, 98-99). But Mefistofele and Martha's music sounds like they actually have more fun to be together. The rhythm of Mefistofele's and accompanied orchestra are shorter and more flexible – it has many stops in-between. So does Martha's "Ha! Ha!" – Not only the words are playful, but also

they are not even starts on the down beat in the score (BS, 99). This unstable rhythms sound nifty and flirtatious. It signifies their playful sexual relationship. Also there is one measure in Mefistofele's music line marked *molto rallentando*. In this measure, the rhythms are the same, so does the notes. In this one measure repeats the same two notes three times and each time much slower than the previous one, this sounds like Mefistofele gets bored and makes fun of his way of speaking, sounds pretty rascally and hilarious (BS, 102).

Then there is an episode played by strings and Bassoon (BS, 104). The strings' minor second double stops are dissonant and it is in piano dynamic, sound dangerous but not that obviously. Like the danger is hiding in somewhere. The Bassoon as Mefistofele's characteristic instrument plays soft and vivid staccato in between strings, sounds ominous. It might indicate Mefistofele does his plan stealthily here. Then the music line descends by half steps, brings an uncomfortable feeling to the audience. When Margherita sings, the music sounds nice again, as if nothing had happened. Margherita asks Faust whether he believes in religion or not? Faust tries to change the topic (BL, 41). The music here is not quite feeling safe, because the ending note of Faust's music line is not on the tonic. When the music line ends on tonic, it feels safe like back to home, so called feeling safe. When the sentence not ends on tonic, it would sounds unfinished. And also his singing rhythm here is faster than his other sentences. This shows his inner guilty conscience that he doesn't want to talk about it any more. He is evasive. That is why I say the music sounds not safe here. When he sings: "Fill your heart with the true and ineffable thrill of love and then call this ecstasy- Nature!

God! Life! God! ...” (BL, 42), his tone and dynamic are suddenly change to a very open and passionate mood. This very open tone brings a feeling that Faust’s words are honest and credible. This part could also find in Goethe: “Margarete: Heinrich, tell me the truth. Faust: As best I can! Margarete: Then say what your religion is. You are a sweet good man, and yet I think religion doesn’t matter much to you. Faust: Hush, child! Your feelings tell you that I love you; I’d give my life for those who’re dear to me, I would deprive no one of either faith or church” (3413-3420). He doesn’t answer the question directly, He plays around. “Margarete: Then you have no faith? Faust: Listen more carefully, my angel! Who can name Him and dare profess, I believe He is! Who can feel deeply and then presume to say, I don’t believe! ...” (3430-3458). He is trying to coax Margarete that he has faith but he just doesn’t want to talk about it, because he thinks this topic is pointless. His words are so sincere that Margarete has no more doubt on him.

There is a contrast between the music and libretto when Faust gives Margherita the small phial: “Faust: ...Take this; just three drops of this potion will induce a lethargy and then tranquil sleep. Margherita: Give it to me... but no harm can come to my mother from it? Faust: No, none at all... sweet angel with the pretty face” (BL, 43-44). The libretto looks harmless, as if nothing going to happen. This is the same as Goethe’s text: “Faust: You angel, that presents no problem. Here is a vial. Three drops in anything she drinks will be enough to put her pleasantly into a deep sleep. Margarete: What is there I won’t do for you! I trust it will not do her any harm? Faust: would I suggest it otherwise, my love” (3510-3516)! According to Faust’s word, there is nothing

harmful will happen but pleasant deep sleep. However, the musical rhythms which accompanied to Faust in Boito's opera in this part get intense. Also Boito uses a lot of second in the music line and keeps going forward and back, not going any where. Then there is a quartet at the ending by sing "I love you" (BL, 46)! It is funny that Mefistofele says that too because he literally has no sense of what love is, but he says that anyway.

Compared to Goethe's and Gounod's Faust, the image of Margherita here is purely innocent. But in Goethe and in Gounod, they both have a scene that Margarete loves Jewelry besides flowers. That shows her less innocent spirit because she likes material things: "... I've never seen the like in all my days! A set of jewels that any lady might wear on highest holidays" (2791-2793)! In the German version, the lady here is actually "Edelfrau", which means a noble woman. She has vanity and she is eager to have an extravagant life. There is also a jewelry scene in Gounod's opera: "*She puts on the earrings and looks at herself in the mirror ...*This is the daughter of a king, to whom everyone bows as she goes past..." (GL, III, 6). She has no interest on Siebel's posy besides the jewelry box but the box itself. By wearing the jewelry, she already start to thinking of the image that she is a princess, a noble woman. The music here changes in 3, a dancing mood, to presents Marguerite's pleasant and happy mood. It shows her happiness to having the Jewelry, the desire of wealth and wealthy life, either in libretto or in music. It shows her guilty conscience. We can find more in Goethe's *Faust* where Gretchen is also not that innocent. "There was a king in Thule faithful until the grave; his dying mistress gave him a goblet made of gold. He had no greater treasure, used it at solemn feast; whenever he drinks from it, his eyes would fill with tears..." (2759-2782).

She sings a love song of a king and his mistress, not his wife. This means she has a desire to pursue love outside of convention. The kind of love she desire in her song is against the tradition and societal norms of marriage. She also sings a song of mistress in Gounod's *Faust*: "There once was a king of Thule, Who, faithful unto the grave, Kept in memory of his lady? Love a vessel of chiseled gold... There was not a lovelier treasure! He used it on great occasions and every time he drank from it, His eyes would fill with tears..." (GL, III, 5). He sings about his lady who is not the king's wife! Strings are playing pizzicato when she sings this song. There is not much music in accompaniment to support her. The pizzicato sounds catlike, as if the thing she sings is not aboveboard to speak out.

After analyzing the Garden scene in three works, we can see how Mephistopheles helps Faust to get close to Margarete and indirectly involves him in the death of Margarete's mother and brother. And more, we find out that Margarete is guilty in Goethe's *Faust* and Gounod's opera. However, in Boito's *Mefistofele*, Margherita is just an innocent girl that gets lost in the love with Faust and does everything Faust wants.

Now we are moving to the next scene when they are in the Harz Mountains, where they celebrate the Witches' Sabbath in Mephistopheles' Empire, to look more on how Mephistopheles give another try to seduce Faust.

The Witches' Sabbath

In my opinion, in Faust's and Mephistopheles' relationship, the most threatening scene takes place in the fifth act of Gounod's *Faust*, in the Harz Mountains during the Witches' Sabbath. Faust is totally under Mephistopheles' control. In addition, the ballet is another interesting part I will talk about in Gounod's opera.

At the beginning of this act, we can hear distinctly flute accompanied by strings in piano dynamic in c minor key. With the light and handy stacato eighth note, rests and sharp forth note in the dance like six eight time signature, this passage sounds tricky. There are accents when the chorus sings "Take care! Take care"! It attracts the audience's attention and then the legato phrase comes out, with half steps. It sounds like the ghosts' talking and the libretto also says: "...here come the souls of the departed" (GL, V, 1)! After that, the music suddenly changes to a threatening motion. Strings play alternating tremolo but in a canon portions, with repetitive music. Fast notes always make the listeners or watchers feel nervous, so does repetition. In films, this type of music is usually used by someone chasing after another person, and also in some situations which imply that someone is walking into danger. Maybe Gounod wants the audience to feel that Faust is totally under Mephistopheles' power now. Faust may fall in Mephistopheles' trap and then Mephistopheles can take Faust's soul to hell.

In addition, we can clearly see Mephistopheles switching from Faust's servant to his controller. Before, Mephistopheles said "your servant" to Faust, and now he says

“Did you not promise to accompany me in silence” (GL, V, 1-2)? Faust always has demands like a child and Mephistopheles always tries his best to satisfy him; When Faust wants something, Mephistopheles gives him something, when Faust gets in trouble then Mephistopheles uses his power to give him a hand. For example, Faust is caught in a duel with Valentin and Mephistopheles uses his magic to make Valentin’s sword break in two, then Faust wins the fight. Even though Valentin has better fighting skills than Faust because he is a soldier, Faust wins anyway and he could not have won without Mephistopheles’ help. Faust can not do anything without Mephistopheles, which indicates how important Mephistopheles is to Faust. Even though superficially we see Mephistopheles helping Faust in this fight scene, below the surface of the interaction Faust is a pawn to Mephistopheles.

Significantly, a ballet is part of the Witches’ Sabbath in Act 5. I think it is so special that Gounod put a ballet in this opera. It impressed me because I have never seen any opera that has a ballet in it. It is a unique part of the nineteenth-century Paris Opera.

Faust was rejected by the Paris Opera, on the grounds that it was not sufficiently "showy", and its appearance at the Théâtre-Lyrique was delayed for a year because Adolphe d'Ennery's drama Faust was playing at the Porte St. Martin..... It was revived in Paris in 1862, and was a hit. A ballet had to be inserted before the work could be played at the Opéra in 1869: it became the most frequently performed opera at that house and a staple of the international repertory, which it remained for decades, being translated into at least 25 languages. (Wikipedia: Faust (opera))

At the time, ballet was in decline in France. However, people were still going to more ballet performances than to opera performances. Gounod had a hard time

showing his opera to the public at first. Perhaps there was a rule he had to follow: he would have to add a ballet to his opera in order to see it performed. The Ballet is the key for him to show his opera to an audience, but it doesn't seem awkward even though he mixed two art forms together. I think the ballet is a reason that his opera got so popular in the first year: afterwards the ballet still played an important role.

There are seven parts in this Ballet. The first two parts have really open and sweet melodies in E flat major key, and could make the audience smile. It sounds really gentle and pleasant and makes people relax. The string section of the orchestra plays a legato music line with a little wood wind accompaniment in harmony. In the third part there is only a woman dancer leading a chorus of dancers, and Gounod adds harp into the orchestra in this part and the harp leads the solo dancer. The orchestral music is still legato but with dotted rhythms, so it sounds more flowing and dance like and makes audiences enjoy the show a lot. The fourth part is called Cleopatra's Dance. Cleopatra VII, known as Cleopatra, was the last active pharaoh of Ptolemaic Egypt. She had a love affair with Julius Caesar when she was 21 years old and Caesar was 52. "Eager to take advantage of Julius Caesar's anger toward Ptolemy, Cleopatra had herself secretly smuggled into his palace to meet with Caesar.....Although Cleopatra was 21 years old when they met and Caesar was 52, they became lovers during Caesar's stay in Egypt between 48 BC and 47 BC....."⁹ I think Cleopatra's and Caesar's relationship anticipates the relationship between Marguerite and Faust because Faust is actually really old and he falls in love with Marguerite. During this part, Faust may start to see

⁹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cleopatra>

Marguerite or think of her in a romantic way. This ballet, then, is not just an entertainment for the opera audience. The music turns into a playful mood. At the beginning, Gounod adds a lot of Bassoon and Trombone and the music gets intense at the end. The music is not as pleasant as before, there is a little tension in the atmosphere. Then the music in the fifth part—The Women of Troy—is even more violent. The orchestral music is fast and contains “nervous half step notes.” The trumpet’s sound adds an element of warfare to the atmosphere. The dancers have more violent actions such as moving fast and exaggerating their body language. It looks more flustered. Maybe it reflects Faust’s inner turmoil: There are many thoughts that pass through Faust’s mind and he is distracted, so the music is troubled.

The sixth part is called Mirror Variations. The mirror has a lot of meanings in many works of art. The most basic use of a mirror is to reflect the thing in a true way: People look at themselves in a mirror to see if they dress neat and clean before going out, or they can see what happened on the back by reflection of a mirror. So as the simplest way to explain the name of Mirror Variation is a reflection of Marguerite – Faust sees Marguerite. We can find a clue with reference to the context: “Can you not see her? There, in front of us, silent and wan! What is this strange ornament around her lovely neck” (GL, V4)? On the other hand, an extended meaning for a mirror could be as an instrument of self-reflection. By seeing their image in a mirror, people can try to feel the feeling about the thing they have done from others perspective, so they could rethink who they are and what they have done objectively. Mirrors don’t embellish or adjust when they reflect. Here, Gounod named the sixth part “The Mirror Variations”

could mean that it is the reflection of Faust's mental action. By thinking again what he has done to Marguerite, he starts to evaluate himself. Meanwhile, the music changes to the pleasant tone at the beginning of this part. It sounds like a metaphor for the earlier happy time between Faust and Marguerite. Then the music suddenly changes back to the same music form and melody like the fifth part. Compared to the fifth part, the tempo is getting even faster and the mood more violent. The name of this last part is "The Dance of Phryne". Phryne was a very beautiful woman.¹⁰ Her beauty charmed men all over the world. I think it is also a metaphor for Marguerite because she is most charming in Faust's idealized image of her. She is his Phryne.

Here Mephistopheles' limitation shows up again. Faust seems not to like his place: "Faust: My blood freezes! *He tries to run away.* Mephistopheles: *holding him back.* Wait! I have but one sign to make and everything here will be transformed and lightened" (GL, V, 2). Mephistopheles then tempts Faust further. He offers good wine and beautiful women as entertainment to make Faust enjoy life here and now. Mephistopheles may want Faust to forget Marguerite, because their relationship has become troublesome. He wants to get rid of this mess. But unfortunately, Mephistopheles loses his control over Faust when Faust enjoys the ballet: He sees Marguerite! Mephistopheles fails to seduce Faust with pleasure.

Now let's look how Boito composes this scene in his opera.

The strings play tremolo in very soft dynamic pianississimo (BS, 117). The music line goes forward and back with half steps and crescendo decrescendo pair with the

¹⁰ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phryne>

direction where music goes. It applies a dark night color in the atmosphere. Then we could hear a familiar distinctive music form that appears before but slightly different: Bassoon plays first two beats and flute plays the last and half beat but with one more note. It sounds like the first appearance music of Mefistofele in the Prelude. Boito uses this element again here to lay down an entrance for Mefistofele.

“Come, now, climb, come on, climb: the sky is dark, the slope is steep... Come on, climb, climb, climb, because far, far away old Satan’s mountain towers up” (BL, 47). Mefistofele uses a deep and imperturbable voice to sing this phrase. It sounds powerful and settled, as if he has changed his character as the leader of Faust. After Mefistofele’s dark and ominous tone, the clarinets play an active and nifty music to lead the appearance of Faust. It might express Faust’s mental activity that he is in curious and happy mood. His music is positive and happy, which has a totally different definition of Mefistofele’s music. “Jack o’ lantern, swift, light, who shine alone along the solitary path, come closer to us for the slope is dark” (BL, 48). The climbing up may make him think that he is striving. He is so happy and singing the light is coming near to them for lighting their dark road, even though that light might be the light from Mefistofele’s mountain. This may also present Mefistofele’s seduction of Faust. Before this scene, Mefistofele always sings alone and Lord sings as a chorus. But here we finally see Mefistofele has a chorus sing with him as distinct echo voice (BS, 119). It might indicate the echo sounding as if they are in a mountain, or he is reaching his empire and he finally has people by his side and they are waiting for him. “Mefistofele: Hark! Hark! Voices: Ah! Mefistofele: From the depths of the valley the howling of a thousand voices

I hear” (BL, 49). Then there is a female chorus that sings really fast, as if they were in a rush to get there. One sentence sings in one note and goes up by half steps, as if they are reaching the stage from distance (BS, 129). “Let us climb, let us climb for the time is cheating us and we’ll miss King Beelzebub’s ball; it is the fateful night, the witches’ Sabbath, the first to reach the top gets one more prize...Up! Up! Up” (BL, 50)! Then follows a male chorus. It seems like they are in a rush because the first one get to the place will have an extra award. These words and their crowding, pushing attitudes show their respect for Mefistofele. They are all rushing to see Mefistofele because they see him as their leader. It is their honor to see him. And even more they want that extra award as if the children want a award sticker from their teacher because their good behavior. This is comparable to Goethe’s *Faust*: “Witches: The path is broad, the path is long, and yet we are a frantic throng! ... Enter Warlocks: Like shell-bound snails we drag along, the women are all in the van – when folk set out for Satan’s house woman’s a thousand steps ahead. We don’t take that too much to heart: no matter how much haste they make, they need a thousand steps to do what men can do in just one leap” (3974- 3985) Even the order of their appearance is well considered from Goethe’s *Faust*. I find it is interesting that there is one phrase of the witches’ and warlocks’ musical line that is similar to the cherubims’ music line in the Prelude (BS, 132-133 & 28-29). It makes me think of demons as fallen angel. Here is a description of devils:

They are fallen angels (who are also commonly known as demons) work for evil purposes that lead to destruction in the world, in contrast to the good purposes of the missions that faithful angels fulfill. Jews and Christians believe that God originally created all angels to be holy, but that one of the most beautiful angels, Lucifer (now known as Satan, or the devil), didn’t return God’s love and

chose to rebel against God because he wanted to try to be as powerful as his creator. Isaiah 14:12 of the Torah and the Bible describes Lucifer's fall: "How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn!" ¹¹

Demons and angels have some common ground in a way, such as demons were angels before they fall, they had the same identity; or in the Boito's opera, they share the same musical elements. That said, they are two powers against each other. The episode starts with strings. The even 16th notes in a circle form and the Presto tempo mark continues the rushing and nervous atmosphere. Then the music suddenly change to a very open key by trumpet and their mood changes to happy and relax as if they get here in time and they are celebrating. It is impressive that Boito uses four fifth here, because fifth sounds very empty as a chord, so people do not usually use that more than two times at one place. But here Boito composes GDAE for witches and warlocks. The empty feeling in music presents their empty soul, because they are a mass that sold their soul to Mefistofele.

When Mefistofele sings in front of his witches and warlocks, his rhythms are long, and witches and warlocks are short and fast. The sharp contrast between his and witches' and warlocks' music shows his position here. So does the orchestra, there is not much notes but each note is stretched and absolutely clear. The music is really jumping when witches and warlocks are gathering in a circle around Mefistofele. Violins high characteristic sound indicates witches and Cellos low characteristic sound indicates warlocks. Violins play the nice and vivid music line with strings pizzicato as background, and then Cellos play the same music form. This part plays in leggerissimo, which is a

¹¹ Who Are Fallen Angels?
<http://angels.about.com/od/AngelBasics/f/Who-Are-Fallen-Angels.htm>

delicate way, suggesting the witches' and warlocks' stealthy attitude (BS, 140&144).

There is a special aria of Mefistofele. He holds a glass globe in his hand. The world he creates looks shiny and beautiful in a perfect round. But it is dangerous because the creatures on the earth such as poisonous mushroom and poison frog, they both look so colorful and beautiful that makes people want to get close to them, however, they could hurt you to death. Also as visual site, the glass globe is empty inside. It is also what Mefistofele likes because everything belongs to him must have no soul inside. And also, glass means fragile. The world to Mefistofele is easy to destroy and he likes to destroy! So I think a glass globe is an appropriate symbol to describe the world of Mefistofele. There only plays a triangle then follows lonely pizzicato by strings. The mysterious sounding of triangle and a few notes played here attract people's attention a lot. It develops audiences' interest what going to happen. Then Mefistofele opens his voice very grounded and powerful: "Here is the world, empty and round, it rises and falls, it bounces and glistens" (BL, 53). He introduces the world slowly in a boring tone, which only has two notes (BS, 145-146). It might indicate Mefistofele's opinion that the world is simple and boring because it is always the same, there is nothing to strive for, and it is empty. Then flutes lead another music line, the swing feeling brings in a little fun. "It dances around the sun, quakes, roars, gives and destroys, now barren, now fertile, this is the world" (BL, 53). After that, he seems getting excited. He starts to talk about the history of the world, especially the rise of evil: "On the wide ancient back there is a race both depraved and mad, proud, vile, cruel, subtle which continually devours itself from top to bottom of the wicked world" (BL, 54). He sings about the

worst in the human character which has grown into a whole race of incarnated evil, and this evil is spreading all over the world. The next part starts with gentle voice from Mefistofele, and also, there is a solo flute playing between his each phrase, melodious and nice. It brings mysterious feeling, as if a grandpa graciously tells a fable to his children: "A fatuous fable is Satan to the human race, Hell is to man a subject for mockery and ridicule, and ridicule and mockery is also levelled at Paradise" (BL, 54). He thinks people are wrong when they laugh at Hell because for Paradise is equally laughable: "Oh, by God, I can laugh too when I think of what I'm hiding from them. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! So much for the world! He flings the glass globe to the ground where it smashes to pieces" (BL, 54). He sings disparaging and his attitude shows his arrogant character that the world to him is like a toy that he can destroy it as easy as he turns his hand over. He thinks people are proud, vile, cruel, crafty which makes the world meaningless, and so the world will be destroyed.

After Mefistofele smashes the "world", the music changes to a dance motif and the demons are dancing and celebrating together with energetic rhythms and aggressive music played by trumpet (BS, 151-155). The rhythm sounds like a march in a way, as if they are ready to do something. The music is happy but the feeling is sinister, maybe it is because the music line goes by whole steps and half steps, they always bring unsafe feeling to people. Then a single flute sound leads Faust standing out from the mass and he says that he sees a woman that looks like his Margherita: "Amazing! Amazing! There far away in the cloudy sky, a maid, pale and sad (can you see her?). Slowly she trails her feet in fetters! Alas, what a pitiful sight... that sweet face resembles Margherita's" (BL,

55). I feel Faust is not quite into Mefistofele's song. It barely see him participate in his dance and he says no word and he interrupts their dance because he sees Margherita. But in Goethe and Gounod, we can clearly find out that he enjoys Mephistopheles' world. He drinks and sings with Mephistopheles in Gounod. In Goethe, he dances with witches before he sees a reflection of Margarete: "Young Witch: (*dancing*). What is that fellow doing at our ball? Faust: (*dancing*) Oh. he's someone who turns up everywhere. His job's to criticize how others dance..." (4148-4175). Faust seems having fun in the celebration party, dancing and talking with witches.

People dance around Mefistofele in Boito's opera reminds me the Golden Calf song in Gounod; I will talk about it later. People on the street also follow Mephistopheles to singing with him like demons in Harz Mountains in Boito's opera. They are both sound active and sinister, but music in Boito's *Witches Sabbath* is more sinister.

The last scene that the three works share is the Prison scene. It is a powerful scene indeed, as the following analysis will show.

The Prison

Now we reach the end of Margarete's life. In Boito's opera, the scene is called The Death of Margherita. It starts with long bows in soft and deep sound from cello and Bass (BS, 178). It shows a picture that the night is long and dark. Five half steps go forth and back in soft and deep sound played by cello and then go even further and back. It indicates the cold wind is blowing and it gets stronger. Then it adds a single voice from flute, sounds like the wind squeezes in a little whole from the prison wall and whistles, It telling us that this room is ruins. Then the music line plays half and half by horn and clarinet is nice but sad. The horn sounds like the glimmer in the early morning and the clarinet brings us back to reality. The characteristic sound of clarinet produces lonely feeling to the audience. The whole beginning presents an overall scope of the environment and the clarinet actually zooms in to a small detail. Then the music changes to higher range, violin's legato and flute's trio bring another music feeling, which is beautiful and heavenly. As if we see Margherita's little fair face and beautiful pure eyes. But then clarinet joins in and breaks the dream that Margherita is not in happiness any more. She stays in a cold and dark prison room, lonely and poor.

Unlike Boito's *Mefistofele*, the beginning of this scene in Gounod is more straight forward and powerful. The sound of snare drum represents the soldiers, and the trombones' long short and short rhythms bring a serious and finished feeling, as if the judgment day is coming. Then the horn of judgment plays its melody continuously, but

the Violas and Cellos are trying to disturb the melody with sound in forte, like Mephistopheles is trying to disturb God's judgment. After a really tense moment, the music suddenly releases to a sad mood and clarinet's characteristic sound joins the orchestra. Then the short clarinet's solo shows a picture of lonely and sad Marguerite to audience. It is more intense than in Boito's opera.

After the instrumental beginning in Boito's opera, there is an aria for Margherita: "The other night they threw my baby to the bottom of the sea; now to drive me crazy they say that I drowned it" (BL, 57). The melody is composed in poignant sadness. It sounds like a hopeless mother figure is narrating her poor baby's death. The forte at the end of phrase presents her madness and sadness on the other people who kill her baby and then slander her as the killer. "The air is cold, the cell is dark, and my sad soul like the wood sparrow flies far, far away. Oh take pity!" She is so sad. When she sings "flies" there is no instrument accompanied her and she sings freely and pointlessly to really high notes and comes back. As if she is hopeless that she has nothing for life. Her ending phrase goes to lower range, sounds like she is weeping. This "Oh take pity!" sounds like she is talking to herself because she knows there is no one listening. "My mother fell a sleep in a drugged lethargy, and to heighten the horror they say I poisoned her. The air is cold, the cell is dark..." The music starts over and she narrates the story of her mother's death. It sounds even more pitiful and sad. Compared with the beginning of Gounod's prison scene, Boito's is more close to the Goethe. Margherita is more like a person who is abandoned by the society and under the pressure of society is morality. "Margarete: ...All night I have been holding it close to my heart; to hurt my

feelings, they took it from me, and now they're saying that I killed it... People are making me their song! It's mean of them! ..." (4442-4450). There is no Mefistofele to threaten and persecute her, because Mefistofele has no power on Margherita just like in Goethe's Faust text: "... She is an innocent, and so much so that she had nothing to confess; over that girl I have no power" (2621-2626). Mephistopheles can do nothing to Margarete because she is faithful, she goes to church. She is good.

Then the music gets intense and excited: "God of mercy! It is them... here they are... help!" (BL, 58). Margherita is afraid because she heard footsteps get close to her. "It is hard to die." Then the music suddenly slows down, presents Margherita is unwilling to end her life this soon. "Oh, heaven! Ah, speak again! Oh, speak! You've come to save me! ..." (BL, 58). When she notices the person who comes to save her is Faust, she is excited. The music imitates the music from the Garden scene, brings a familiar feeling of sweetness in their early love as celebrating the reunion for them. "Look, this is the street where I saw you for the first time... here's Martha's garden..." (BL, 59). Then the music gradually leads to the real reappearance of music at the end of Garden scene, happy, full of vitality and hope (BS, 185). It indicates Margherita recalls their love to Faust and she is so happy when she thinking about that. But their phrases are different: "Faust: Oh, come... come with me. Margherita: Stay a while... a little longer... Why don't you kiss me... won't you kiss me? ... oh, your lips are like ice... What happened to your love" (BL, 59)? Margherita wants to stay in that happiness moment. But Faust can't. He is anxious because he wants Margherita go with him right now – he wants to move on. Staying for Faust is impossible because he likes to strive! Margherita

finally finds out Faust no longer loves her. Her voice changes to the deep music range from really high music range and then at the background, the Garden scene music has been interrupted by an accented long note. The love memory of Margherita is broken.

In Gounod's *Faust*, Marguerite is also excited when she hears her lover's voice: "Ah, this is my beloved's voice! His call has revived my heart...His hand, his gentle hand draws me! I am free. He has come!..." (GL, V, 5). Her music line goes higher and higher and she gets more and more excited with ascend notes from violin's tremolo. It represents her happiness and excitement to see Faust. Then Faust sings a sweet melody in moving motion: "Yes, here I am! I love you! Despite even the efforts of the jeering demon, I have found you! Now you are safe! Here I am! Come, rest on my heart!" (GL, V, 6). He tries to ask Marguerite escape with him with sweet word and warm melody, as if he still loves Marguerite. But Marguerite frees herself from Faust's arms and sings a song of memory: "Wait. Here is the street where you saw me for the first time!..." (GL, V, 6). The music is the same as her first appearance music at the end of Act 2. She sings all the memory in one note A, but here it sounds calm, pale and unconscious like murmuring, as if she is talking to herself. Violins play a sweet Valse melody to accompany her but with a gentle and soft sound. The high music range and soft sound brings us back to the happiness moment but not realistic. Gounod even quote his libretto and uses the same music line as before at the end of second Act: "My lovely young lady, will you not allow me to offer you my arm and escort you on your way?" "No thank you, sir; I am neither a lady, nor lovely, And I really have no need for a supporting arm" (GL, V, 6). Marguerite sings this dialogue by herself with full

emotion. She even remember the word they said at their first meet, it represents her deep love of Faust. Then Faust sings: "Yes, my heart remembers. But come with me! Time flies!" (GL, V, 6). He has a lot more support from the orchestra than Marguerite, and the tremolos from violins indicate Faust's anxious feeling. This contrast also makes me feel not only about their mood, but also their physical condition that Faust is lively and healthy but Marguerite is weak and has not much power to speak. Basically Boito and Gounod are using the same skill – reuse the old music, to bring the same feeling as old time. But in Gounod, Marguerite hasn't shown that she knows Faust no longer loves her. Her attitude seems like she is being attacked by all of the sorrowful things that happened to her life, such as her mother, brother and now her baby die; she is hopeless and immerses in sadness and just wants to die. This is the reason why she doesn't want to go with Faust, not because Faust doesn't love her or she admits her guilt.

After Margherita finds out that Faust doesn't love her any more in Boito, she is kind of angry but she is so sad that she is soon back to her sad mood. Margherita starts to tell Faust how to bury her. She is not willing to leave because she admits she killed her mother and her child and she should stay to expiate her guilt. And also, she lost everything in her life and everyone abused her. She has no reason to stay alive! Here is also the same as in Goethe: "Faust: Come! Hurry! Darkness is already waning. Margarete: I am the one who killed my mother, I am the one who drowned my child...I want to tell how the graves should be... I cannot leave; for me there is no hope. Why run away when they are watching for me? It's terrible to be reduced to begging, and then with a bad conscience too" (4506- 4547)! The life out there for her is hopeless.

Everyone is watching her, there is nowhere to go for escape. Even though he knows what Margherita thinks, he still wants to persuade Margherita to go with him: “Faust: Oh, just look at me! Hear love’s voice entreating you! Come, let us fly. Margherita: Yes, let us fly... I already dream of an enchanted haven of peace, where we shall live happily united. (Faust and Margherita, embracing, gaze into each other’s eyes dreamily)” (BL, 61). Faust’s tone is excited and open, as if he has hope of their future if she escapes with him. Then there is another love duet for Margherita and Faust. It is different than the previous one in the Garden scene. It sounds peaceful and heavenly just like a dream. They sing the same thing and the same rhythms in harmony, but never in the same tone. In the previous one, they sing different words but in the same melody. It may indicate even though they try to find their love again, their feeling for each other is not the same any more.

Their dream is broken by Mefistofele’s warning: “Day is dawning” (BL, 62)! Then Margherita is in panic because she sees Mefistofele and she thinks he is coming for her. There is a trio of Faust, Margherita and Mefistofele, like in Gounod’s *Faust*. These three sound like they are not listening to one another. They are all concerned about themselves. Mefistofele sings deep and fast: “Cease, cease your vain words, in the eastern sky the sun is rising...” (BL, 62). He is forcing Faust to do his business quicker because the time is almost up. “Oh, God, help me, oh God, aid me, they are leading me to death, oh Heaven” (BL, 63)! Margherita is begging God shouting for him to save her from the devil. Her music line is high and fast too. It may indicate that she is afraid to be taken by devil and she is rushed to beg God at this very last minute. “My child, calm

your distracted spirit and let me see your pale face composed; control that spate of useless sighing, we must flee” (BL, 63). Faust still tries to persuade Margherita to escape with him. He now sings fast too, like Mefistofele and Margherita. It may indicate that he is impatient or almost angry about Margherita’s behavior, because she is not listening and wastes time. “Oh, would that I had never been born!” (BL, 63). Faust sings in a shouting voice here. It seems like he has too much to deal with at the moment. Or he is frustrated because he can do nothing for Margherita now; like Mefistofele, his word is not enticing to Margherita to follow him without any doubt.

Then oboes play long notes in whole step together in piano dynamic, sound empty and sorrowful, like Margherita’s mood. These two notes lead to Margherita’s heart-broken and painful aria: “The pale dawn... is breaking... my last day is here...” (BL, 64). Her music is pale and plain, almost in the same note. It sounds like she is in a peaceful mood to face the last day of her life. “It should have been our joyful wedding day...” (BL, 64). Her tone goes high, as if the thing she sings about were the most beautiful thing that could ever happen in her life, like her princesses’ dream. But the going down gentle half steps make everything she sings fade into a grieved and sad mood. “All is ended... in life” (BL, 64). She sings emotional that her life has been destroyed and now she is close to the end. “Hush... Tell no one that you loved Margherita and that I gave you my heart. Oh Lord, Thou wilt forgive a dying woman...” (BL, 65). Her tone goes really high when she pleading to God, as if she regrets the stupid thing she has done and hopes that God will forgive her. “Holy father, save me, and you, heavenly ones, protect this suppliant who turns to you” (BL, 65). It is

interesting that her tone is the same as the celestial host at the very beginning of this opera (BS, 4 & 198). Besides, the score marked “Come nel Prologo,” shows more clearly that it is the same as the prologue. Interestingly, Gounod uses the same composing skill as Boito because Marguerite sings the same tone as the angels when she is begging God to forgive her (GL, V, 7). It indicates that God has heard of her confession and God is now with her. It also foreshadows her later salvation, the place she will go after death is heaven, at the end.

Boito’s libretto is really close to Goethe in this part, too: “Margarete: Day! Yes, the day begins – the Day of Judgment that should have been my wedding-day! Let no one know you’ve been in Gretchen’s room...All is silence – the silence of the grave! Faust: O, that I never had been born” (4580-4596)! In the book, the reason why Faust says this is more like he suffers great pains when he hears Margarete’s cold word to him and her death. But Marguerite in Gounod doesn’t say this.

Now comes the end of this scene. After Margherita entreats God to forgive her in Boito’s opera, Mefistofele tries to judge her before God: “She is judged” (BL, 65). He sings full of energy, as if he had won. But Margherita isn’t afraid at all: “Heinrich... (*She falls dying*) you disgust me” (BL, 65). She has no music to sing here, just speak, the tremolo A played by violin is also barely to be heard. In one performance of the opera, she speaks this like a sign that she has no passion and love for Faust. And also, in my opinion, the non-music musical line indicates her heart is dead and she has no more music for Faust. Then the violin leads to her salvation moment: “She is saved” (BL, 65)! The massive sound is gentle and warm, like the door to paradise is open to Margherita.

This moment is different in Gounod's *Faust*. After Faust failed to force Marguerite to escape with him, he is kind of impatient to call Marguerite's name. The snare drum sound and violin's tremolo applies tense feeling in the atmosphere. "Why do your eyes threaten? ... Why are those hands red with blood? Go away! You fill me with horror" (GL, V, 9)! She sings excitedly in a shouting voice and there is no music accompaniment when she says "you fill me with horror." This is a huge moment that Marguerite is furious and shouts out her hate for Faust. With a gong's sound, Marguerite dies, Mephistopheles sings "Judged!" by himself with no instrumental accompaniment but really deep and powerful. However, it doesn't mean that he has gotten Marguerite's soul. The Angelic choir sings "Saved" in the same tone as Mephistopheles with the holy instruments, organ and harp. The massive voice sounds full and warm like in Boito's opera, but grander. It brings more powerful feeling to the audience.

This brings the analysis of scenes shared by the three works to a close. In the next chapter, I will analyze some unique scenes that are not found in all of the works, starting with the Prelude in Boito and Goethe.

Chapter Two

Prelude

Boito's opera starts with Prelude, unlike Gounod's opera, which starts with the Pact scene between Mephistopheles and Lord and does not contain a Prelude. It is quite shocking that the Prelude is composed in 3/4. The time signature 3/4 is known as Valse rhythm, the form that feels the most like a dance. "It was conceived as a ballet but is now more often heard as a concert work." It always sounds vivacious and makes people willing to dance. So I was interested to see how Boito would make the Prelude work, because in my opinion, the way Goethe wrote the bet between God and Mephistopheles in "Prologue in Heaven" (Goethe's Faust) doesn't seem to be danceable to me.

The piece opens with the whole orchestra playing the note E. The sound of the whole orchestra is very full and powerful, as if the world has been created, and the first light drilled through the darkness, shining on the earth. Then follows the trumpet's fanfare in E major. The tone is bracing and full of love, and because the score asks for: "*A trumpet sounds from the centre, behind the curtain, shrilly, in slow rhythm and easy time*" (BS, 1, Prologue in the Heaven), the trumpet doesn't play loud. It is more like a distant sound. It may indicate the sounds of God. Besides, the rhythm is unflappable, so even though the trumpet sounds majestic, the opening still sounds relaxing to me. After a few measures, the harp and the flute come in. These instruments usually represent

goddesses. The harp's arpeggio and tender sound, accompanied by flute's pure and clean characteristic voice, represent everything beautiful and lovely in the world. It creates a picture of life to the audience – the river is running, the grass is growing, flowers are blooming, birds are singing, and so on. It brings pleasant feelings to people. In addition, because the dance rhythm can be heard more distinctly here, it makes the picture more vivid. After the harp's arpeggio, the full orchestra is playing and brings more fanfare to the music. It sounds more strict and stately, as if God is making rules for the world. Then almost the same formation repeats again and again, as if God is trying to make the world more orderly and perfect. The contrasting musical fragments of the beautiful, fast, tender melody, and the slow, solemn instrumental arrangement in the opening bring a lot of pictures to the imagination. These fragments could mean goodness and badness, or forgiveness and punishment, or woman and man, or heaven and earth, and so on. It is an impressive opening because Good and Evil actually exist in the world side by side; it is the balance of power in the actual world.

After the instrumental opening, the chorus of angels is exalting the unnamed Lord, singing about the world's harmony, love and joy. The voices start peaceful, then grow and grow to a big climax, with full orchestra and a distinct harp voice. It sounds really grand and warm. After finishing the massive song, the music suddenly changes to a vivacious mood and Mefistofele appears. The Bassoon plays the first two beats and the piccolo and the flute play the last beat with a grace note (BS, 10). These short notes are totally different from the long notes before, sounding cute and stealthy. These may depict the character of Mefistofele. Compare to God's music, Mefistofele's entrance

music is short and catlike, it shows his playful and furtive work style clear.

It is extraordinary that in Boito's opera, there is no God in the libretto but in the music. We can hear his word in the angels' chorus and his melody in the music of the opera, but we can not actually see him. This "no-where" God setting makes me actually feel God is everywhere. It is wonderful!

After analyzing the instrumental part of the Prelude, we will move on to the plot. I found that Boito's libretto is closer to Goethe. Basically he uses Goethe as a reference to write his libretto, and sometimes he copied some actual sentences exactly from the book. For instance: "Hail, lovely sprites. You pardon I'll be seech. If you should find my speech, not so sweet as the songs of this fair place... Forgive my way of speaking, start not nor wonder, if I should make some blunder..." (BL, 4). It is similar to Goethe's *Faust*. Mephistopheles says he speaks in a different way to God, he doesn't have gracious language, and he complains that humans are miserable (272-292).

Another way that Boito's opera is similar to Goethe's *Faust* is the inclusion of the Penitents which are not in Gounod's opera. The penitents are people who regret all the things they have done and show their faithful hearts to God. In the second part of Goethe's *Faust*, Margarete becomes a penitent in heaven, because she dies at the end of the first half of Goethe's *Faust* and she is saved because she repents. Now at the beginning of Boito's opera, there is already a character designated as the penitents in heaven. This shows clearly that not only people who are innocent can go to heaven after they die, but also people who repent their sins. It foreshadows Margarete's later salvation. In the Prelude, we hardly notice that there are Penitents singing with the

Chorus, so it makes the foreshadowing indirect.

However, the power of the Lord and Mefistofele in Boito's opera is different than in Goethe's *Faust*. There is a bet between Mefistofele and the Lord in Boito's opera: "Mefistofele: I'll take it upon myself to seduce him and ensnare him in my toils; will you wager on it? Mystic Choir: So be it. Mefistofele: Amen! Aged Father, you have ventured into a tough game. He will bite the sweet apple of vice and I shall triumph over the King of Heaven" (BL, 19)! Mefistofele and God are betting on who will gain Faust's soul. Mefistofele is regarded as an individual power that fights against the authority of God. God and Mefistofele are equally powerful in the world. But in Goethe's *Faust* we read:

"Mephistopheles: Agreed! The business won't take long. As for my bet, I'm not the least bit worried. When I achieve my purpose, let me beat my breast triumphantly. Dust shall he eat, and greedily, like my celebrated serpent-cousin.

Lord: When that occurs, again come uninvited. I have no hate for creatures of your kind. Of all the spirits of negation rogues like you bother me the least. Human activity slackens all too easily, and people soon are prone to rest on any terms; that's why I like to give them the companion who functions as a prod and does a job as devil..." (330-343).

In Goethe, Mephistopheles' role is more like a pawn of the Lord. He is sent by the Lord to befriend Faust, to encourage and warn Faust time and again to avoid humanity's inherent laziness and keep striving. Mephistopheles is excited to do this work. He acts like an aspiring staff member when he finally gets a big job from his boss.

This is a chance to prove his ability to his boss, and he thinks that he might be able to do it better than his boss. This is the reason why I say their relationship is different.

During the whole conversation in the Prelude, I found that the trumpet always plays with God and the Bassoon always plays with Mefistofele. So maybe the Bassoon is the instrument that represents Mefistofele in this opera. Mefistofele is a bass singer in Boito's opera, while in Gounod's *Faust*, he is set as bass-baritone. His music line in Boito's opera is even deeper. This might show more distinctions of his character. His phrasing is long and unhurried, more like he is narrating. His voice is grounded and strong, showing his mighty authority. This instrumental setting supports the character of Mefistofele established in the plot before.

The Death of Faust and Salvation

“(Faust’s laboratory as in Act One, but showing the ravages of time. It is night. A lamp burns fitfully. A Bible lies open, as before, on the lectern. Faust is seated upon a stool, absorbed in troubled thoughts. Mefistofele looms like an incubus behind him)” (BL, 77). This stage setting at the end of Boito’s opera shows everything as at the beginning, but everything looks old as it “ravaged by time”. It looks like Faust sat on his stool and had a very long dream. Because Boito uses the second part of Goethe’s *Faust*, his opera actually goes to the end of Faust’s life. In this scene, we can see more of Mefistofele’s limitations.

This scene starts with solo oboe and clarinet play dissonant chord in e minor, calm and distressed. It might indicate Faust’s situation that he is “in troubled thoughts,” as it says in the stage instructions quoted above. Compared with the end of previous scene, the key is in major and violins play tremolo in a really high music range, sounds heavenly and beautiful; this scene sounds more realistic and empty. Faust is calm and rational after world exploration with Mefistofele. He is still not satisfied, which is the empty feeling in the music, but has experienced the world, which is the realistic feeling in the music, because now he is not that idealistic as before and has experience. Bassoon, the instrument of Mefistofele, joins the melody later. But differently, bassoon sounds no longer vivid. It sounds pale and powerless because the music line is only different long note in the same duration of rhythms, I can hardly feel moving in bassoon’s phrase and also the pianissimo dynamic makes it barely to be heard, feels

weak.

Mefistofele says to Faust: "...you have lusted, enjoyed and then lusted anew, but still you have not bid the fleeting moment: Linger yet, thou art so fair" (BL, 78)! Now Faust's is about to die, Mefistofele is quite unhappy that the bet on Faust's soul is much harder to do than he thought. Even Mefistofele has fulfilled many of Faust's desires, none has fully satisfied him. Faust never satisfied and then he just want a new thing to strive for. Even though I think Faust can be blamed for too many desires, but not once did he say that he wants the moment to stay as the condition in their pact stated, that means Mefistofele will lose the bet. "Every mortal mystery have I savored, the Real, the Ideal, the love of a maiden, the love of a goddess...Yes. But reality brought suffering and the Ideal was a dream" (BL, 78). There is not much music accompaniment when Faust expresses his emotion, but it sounds very touching and full of faith. The loves he has tasted were beautiful and sweet, but these two experiences are both imperfect. The reality is his love for Margherita was beautiful and viable, but because of the pressure of religion and society, love became selfish and fragile and then goes to tragedy that brings a lot of pain. The ideal is his love of Helen, the fulfillment of his desire for beauty. This is not a mortal love but the love of worship. Faust tries to pursue beauty and love rationally. But Helen's departure means his failure of his pursuit of beauty and he finally knows the way he chased after beauty is impracticable. It was only a dream. "Having reached the last step of extreme old age, my soul now delights in a final dream. King of a tranquil world, of a boundless expanse, I want to give life to a fruitful people...I would like people and flocks and houses and fields and country villas to rise

in thousands” (BL, 78-79). Faust sings with full of love and passion about his last dream of a social utopia with happy people, which would be the fulfillment of his greatest desire: Man and nature live in harmony and full of the spirit of freedom. It is also a dream of Faust in Goethe: “...If only I might see that people’s teeming life, share their autonomy on unencumbered soil; then, to the moment, I could say: tarry a while, you are so fair—the traces of my days on earth will survive into eternity” (11579-11584)! Faust hopes people’s life would be productive and “democratic”: people like to help each other and achieve common prosperity together. The experience of world exploration after Faust’s life of knowledge pursuit in books renews his passion and hope for life. “Faust: ...Envisioning those heights of happiness, I now enjoy my highest moment. Mephistopheles: ...this final, mediocre, empty moment—the poor wretch wants to cling to it...a stupid world! Why over? What’s over, and mere nothing, are the same” (11585-11597). Faust is enjoying his vision of utopian society, but Mephistopheles thinks there is nothing. Faust’s creative dream is juxtaposed to Mephistopheles destructive nihilism, and it indicates that Faust and Mephistopheles are not the same kind of person at all. In Boito’s opera, Faust’s dream about a creating life for people contrasts with Mefistofele’s “willing evil but always do good” character indirectly. Besides Mefistofele doing a good thing by saving Faust from drinking the poisonous potion, he saves Faust’s passion for life. “(to himself) I will search out his desire... Oh, tempter, beware” (BL, 79)! Mefistofele seems at his wit’s end. He tries so hard to find Faust’s desire and wants to change Faust to an epicurean man, but he failed. “An, what gleam disturbs the silent gloom? ... Good now shines out to him” (BL,

79). As Faust keeps singing about his vision, emotion and good will of human's future, the situation is out of Mefistofele's control. Faust is no longer listening to him, so he only talks to himself. His voice is still thick and grounded, but because his phrase is not connecting with Faust's music line, even he can't disturb Faust's continuous passionate phrase, it sounds like his word has no influence on Faust. He loses his power. In Goethe's *Faust*, Faust also looks like he rejects Mephistopheles: "I have not fought my way to freedom yet! If I could rid my path of magic, could totally unlearn its incantations, confront you, Nature, simply as a man, to be a human being would then be worth the effort" (11403-11407). He hopes to get rid of the magic, which is Mephistopheles' black Magic. It means he now doesn't want Mephistopheles to give him a path that could quickly get him what he wants. He now feels man should put an effort into what they want and then everything would be worth it. When he now rejects Mephistopheles magic, he rejects Mephistopheles in a way.

"(To Faust, spreading out his cloak on the ground as in Act I) Come! I spread out my cloak... and we'll fly through the air" (BL, 80)! Mefistofeles sings the same phrase and doing the same thing for Faust as in Act I. It's his last try to seduce Faust and get this soul, because he feels threatened that he is about to lose the bet. But Faust has no response and the celestial hosts start to sing the same phrase as in the Prelude. Then Faust holds the Bible in his hand and joins the celestial hosts: "The Gospel is my bastion" (BL, 82)! He goes back to the Bible, which he doesn't do in Goethe's *Faust*. This shows audience clearly that he is now on the side that is against Mefistofele, he sees clearly that God is his faith which protect him from Mefistofele. He prays to God

for mercy with celestial chord as background music: “Merciful God, deliver me from my mocking demon, lead me not into temptation” (BL, 82)! Faust sings in one note and even rhythm, as if he were chanting a prayer. He repents his guilt to God. Then he falls dead in a shower of roses. Faust has been saved. Mefistofele seems to suffer: “turn away, turn away!... (*struggling beneath the heavenly light and the rain of roses, still mocking but sinking deeper into the ground*) Roses rain down upon my feverish head, my limbs are eaten away by the rays of light and the flowers” (BL, 82). Mefistofele’s voice has drowned in the Celestial host’s chord and the whole orchestra. Mefistofele looks insignificant and loses his power when he is faced with the huge mass of angels against him. “The Lord has won, but the reprobate whistles! Eh!!! (*whistling*)” (BL, 85). He is no longer the “god” that he imagined himself to be when he whistled in the beginning. Now he has no word to say and his voice is reduced to a whistle. Faust’s salvation is a foregone conclusion; Mefistofele loses his bet with God.

Boito use of roses in his staging at the end of his opera seems deliberate, because Goethe also mentioned roses in his text: “Angels: (in chorus, strewing roses) Roses so brilliant and aromatic, fluttering, floating, secretly quickening—on leaf-wings to hold you, with blossoms unfolding, hasten to bloom! Springtime and crimson and purple, appear! Bring paradise down to him who rests here” (11699-11708)! The rose is the symbol of God’s love, and devils would be hurt by it. In addition, it might be a hint that Faust will go to paradise after death because he has divine love from God.

In Boito, when Mefistofele says: “(*struggling beneath the heavenly light and the rain of roses, still mocking but sinking deeper into the ground*) Roses rain down upon my feverish

head, my limbs are eaten away by the rays of light and the flowers” (BL, 84). Mefistofele seems like dying here: he is sinking into the ground. On the one hand, it could be he is sinking deeply into his world, because his world—hell, is under the ground; on the other hand, it could be he is dying, because he is struggling under the heavenly light, and the light would hurt him. And more, he says his limbs are eaten away by lights and roses, it sounds like he is melting, disappearing and dying. However, in Goethe, he is more like going back to his hell: “...(*He makes fantastic gestures of conjuration, in the manner of a squad-leader.*) Here, quickly! On the double! ...(*The hideous hell-mouth, placed stage-left, opens its jaws.*) Past gaping tusks the fiery torrent pours raging from the dome of the abyss...” (11612-11675). There are Lemures, fat devils and thin devils. Hell opens its jaws while he instigates his devils to fight for Faust’s soul with the angels, not like a single person all by himself against the holy masses as in Boito. He seems to have much more power in Goethe than in Boito, and Faust’s soul is just one soul he fights for in his life. His failure to get Faust’s soul is not a big deal. He feels unfortunate and he goes back to his world with his demons.

The Golden Calf song

Mephistopheles has many arias in Gounod's Faust. In general, the devil is a role that people do not like because they are bad. They rarely have much singing to do, much less arias. This is unusual for a devil. Out of Mephistopheles' many arias in Gounod's Faust, the one which fascinated me most is "The Song of the Golden Calf," because it shows a different Mephistopheles than in Goethe. And also, it is the first and the most famous aria for Mephistopheles in this opera.

The Golden Calf is a symbol of blasphemy. There is a biblical story about the Golden Calf: Moses is a prophet in the Abrahamic religions. He goes up Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments from the God of the Israelites. But since he needs to carve the Ten Commandments on a tablet, he leaves the Israelites for forty days and nights. The Israelites are afraid that he will not return, so they ask Aaron, the older brother of Moses, to make them a "God." Aaron gathers the Israelites' golden earrings and ornaments and melts them to form a "Golden Calf" and he even builds an altar for it so that people can worship the "Lord." On the second day, the people sit down to eat, drink and rise up again to have fun together. Meanwhile, God tells Moses what the Israelites are doing back in their hometown: The Israelites have turned quickly away from God who commanded them. Moses becomes really angry. He goes down from the mountain, breaks the tablets in pieces. He burns the "Golden Calf" and even kills 3000 people who betrayed him.

When Mephistopheles sings “The Song of the Golden Calf” by himself in front of the folks on the stage, he looks like a person who loves to show off and has ambition. I think this is a contrast to Goethe’s Faust because Goethe’s Mephistopheles is never shown in front of people. The aria starts in c minor.¹² The sixteenth notes and the rhythm sound like a dancing song and the key makes the melody sound wicked, like a dancing of devils. It is fantastic! But when Mephistopheles begins to sing, it gradually changes to a major key. Especially when he sings about the people worshipping the Golden Calf: “They whirl in a frenzied ring round and round his pedestal!” with brass fanfare. It sounds like the joy of the song coming through. It sounds pretty unexpected and shocking because the notes change to quarter notes and the melody sounds really joyful. I think it is unusual that a devil would sing in major key. It makes me think that he is pretending to be God, and he is trying to seduce people to have faith in him because he persuades people to believe he is working for God by his decent (or major) tone. However, it doesn’t last long. The music soon goes back to the sinister phrase like the beginning of the song when he sings “Satan leads the dance” (GS, 99-101), but it really works because people keep dancing to his song till the song ends. Mephistopheles sings the whole song energetically and full of confidence, even a little bit cocky. In contrast, in Goethe’s Faust, Mephistopheles does not like to show his power in front of the public (except for the Walpurgis Night scene). He is used to doing things secretly or hidden from people. He is the kind of person who always keeps quiet in the background, not like Gounod’s showy Mephistopheles on the stage.

¹² Faust, Charles Gounod, Oper in fünf Act, Berlin: Bote & Bock, n.d.[1869]. Plate B. & B. 8292, Pg. 95.
All subsequent citations of Gounod’s score are from this edition, with GS and page number

It is quite interesting that the masses follow his song and sing “And Satan leads the dance” with him, even though they know the words of this song are devilish. It shows Mephistopheles’ power that he could seduce people and make them sell their souls to him to join his side. He made people celebrate and sing of the blasphemous symbol with only a song! Maybe it is because of the power of music. In the fairy tale Snow White, when Snow White sings, the animals which don’t understand human language at all soon listen to her, gathering around her and even helping her clean the house. So, when Mephistopheles sings in the joyful tone described before, the people stop thinking. They follow him blindly and sing that evil song. In addition, for the staging, he even throws money in the air to seduce people. Maybe this is another reason why people fawn over Gounod’s Mephistopheles and sing with him, because they know that as long as the music doesn’t end they get more and more money. Goethe’s Mephistopheles would never give people money in such a public way.

But Gounod’s Mephistopheles does not have as much power as God and he is not able to seduce all the people with these methods. He has his limitations. In Gounod’s opera, after Mephistopheles’ “Song of the Golden Calf,” everyone expresses thanks to him. They love his song and feel very happy when the song is sung. But Marguerite’s brother Valentin stands aside and regards Mephistopheles as a misfit: “Valentin: (aside) What an odd fellow” (GL, II, 8)! He is not pleased with the song at all. I believe Mephistopheles is limited in his effect on a person who has strong moral convictions in his soul such as Valentin, he is a soldier and soldiers are not easy to destroy: “Valentin: Enough of that! Upon my life, I shall silence you here and now! The wine from the

barrel bursts into flames. Valentin and Wagner unsheathe their swords” (GL, II, 9). It seems like they recognize that something is wrong here and that they are aware of the evil in Mephistopheles. They want to kill Mephistopheles because they think he is immoral. “Valentin: taking his broken sword by the blade and showing it crosswise to Mephistopheles It is cross which protects us from hell! As he sees the cross Mephistopheles draws back...” (GL, II, 10). We can feel the fear of Mephistopheles at this moment. This indicates that although he has huge power to get whatever he wants most of the time, he is still under God’s power—There is still a restriction on him. As I mentioned before, demons are fallen angels. Devils were working for God and doing holy work before their fall. So they were under God’s control and they have fear of God inherently. That is why even though Mephistopheles has a lot of power and we think that he is afraid of nothing, he still has fear of Lord, because he was under Lord’s control and he still is. His identity as a devil was granted by Lord, too – Lord sent him to be a devil (336-349).

After a while, people are singing in major key with Valentin. They are singing their own music against an isolated Mephistopheles. Compared with their silly attitude during the “Golden Calf Song,” they seem to be sober here. It also shows another one of Mephistopheles’ power limitations: He can not make people stay on his side forever: maybe because the way he treats or leads people are not decent and people realize it at some point.

There are also some parts in the Goethe’s *Faust* showing Mephistopheles’ limitations. His debut in Goethe’s *Faust* is as a poodle, because he is afraid if he appears

as himself, it may cause panic in the street and make it difficult to get to Faust. But luckily, he successfully catches Faust's attention by his debut idea and Faust brings him home. Then he shows his real identity in Faust's room. After talking to Faust, there is a critical issue facing Mephistopheles: "There's a confession I must take. A little obstacle prevents my walking out: the incubus-foot on the sill of your door" (1393-1395)! There is a "pentagram" (1396) on the sill of Faust's door. The pentagram is a holy symbol drawn with five star-shaped strokes and points. "The pentagram was used in ancient times as a Christian symbol for the five senses, or of the five wounds of Christ."¹³ It shows his limitation for sure because this is only a small holy print but it restricts Mephistopheles' ability to go across. In addition, there is another place of Mephistopheles' limitation concerning the potion that could make Faust younger. Faust asks Mephistopheles to make a potion because Faust believes Mephistopheles has "supernatural power": "Faust: Why does it have to be a witch? Can't you yourself concoct the potion? Mephistopheles: ...Of course the devil taught her how to do it, but he can't do the work himself" (2366-2377) Faust refuses to see the witch in the beginning, but since Mephistopheles' power is not almighty, Faust has to meet the witch with Mephistopheles. Moreover, when Faust asks Mephistopheles to get Margarete for him, Mephistopheles says: "...She is innocent, and so much so that she had nothing to confess: over that girl I have no power" (2621-2626). He can do nothing to Gretchen because she is virtuous and a true believer in God – she goes to church and does confession. Her faith is also an obstacle to Mephistopheles' power. There is another

¹³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentagram>

power limitation of Mephistopheles shown in the prison scene in Goethe's *Faust*:
"Faust: ...Take me to her, I say, and set her free! Mephistopheles: I will take you there.
And what I can do, hear! Is all the power in heaven and on earth mine" (Goethe's *Faust*,
An Expanse of Open Country, Pg. 113)? If he had no limitations, he could just use his
power to break into the prison and bring Gretchen to Faust, but Mephistopheles can't.
The only thing he can do is take Faust to Gretchen in another way. Obviously he knows
his limitation because he asks Faust a question in reply implying that omnipotence is
not his. Yet, the power he has is still more than what ordinary people have.

The Cathedral Scene

Mephistopheles shows his devilishness in act four in Gounod's opera and the music reveals his true character finally.

It begins with Marguerite. She is praying for forgiveness from God beside the church. Marguerite's melody is graceful and expresses her sadness and remorse. There is no instrument accompanying her and she sounds like she is weeping. It is so touching. When Mephistopheles sings, an organ plays with him and he sings: "No! You shall not pray! Strike her with terror" (GL, IV, 1)! The music suddenly changes when the word "Strike" is heard – the strings are playing tremolo, making the atmosphere tense and grisly (GS, 270). It shows that Mephistopheles has a lot of power because the music is all on his side – Gounod adds much instrumental music to accompany him and it sounds grand. When Mephistopheles says: "Strike her with terror", the Forte-piano from the strings makes his words strict and overbearing. After that there is Demons calling Marguerite's name. It shows Mephistopheles' power too because they were conjured up by Mephistopheles. This is terrible for Marguerite because she can hear the voice of the demons but not the angels, which implies that she is close to hell but not heaven. She feels grieved and fearful.

After this passage, Mephistopheles is singing with the organ (GS, 273) – the instrument of God. He is pretending to be God to Marguerite. When he is saying: "Hell is claiming you! Hell is pursuing you! Here comes with eternal remorse and

anguish in everlasting night” (GL, IV, 2)! The orchestra is gradually rising up by semitones to a climax, sounds threatening and powerful (GS, 273-274). It seems that Marguerite is going to hell after she dies for sure and there is no room for any change. It is useless to struggle right now. After this moment, words from Mephistopheles are getting more and more influential because the brasses join the accompaniment (GS, 274). Brasses are instrumentally loud and show moments of power. They always sound forceful and grand in the orchestra and occasionally they overwhelm the whole orchestra. Gounod uses brass in the accompaniment to create a contrast between Marguerite’s puniness and Mephistopheles’ mightiness. Besides this, Mephistopheles sounds bossier and ruthless with the fanfare.

If we look at the dialogue, it also shows the character of Mephistopheles. “No! You shall not pray!” “No! God no longer forgives you! The sky no longer dawns for you! No! No” (GL, IV, 2)! In Goethe’s *Faust*, Mephistopheles is “the spirit of negation” (336-339), and there is a lot of opportunity for Gounod’s Mephistopheles to say “No” too. It fits his role. Besides, he shows his mercilessness by repeating “hell is awaiting you” and “God no longer forgives you!” Also, “And God, at the same time! Hear these clamours!” shows his callousness, too (GL, IV, 2). He attacks Marguerite by saying that Marguerite’s praying sounds like noise to God. In addition, in Gounod’s setting, the invisible chorus sounds like angels, but they sing: “What shall I tell the Lord then” (GL, IV, 2)? They have nothing to tell the Lord. It sounds like the door of heaven has shut down for Marguerite and that is why she seems so helpless at that moment.

In addition, Gounod’s libretto references traditional requiems because he uses

similar language: *Libera me*, Deliver me, is a Roman Catholic requiem: "...that is sung in the Office of the Dead and at the absolution of the dead, a service of prayers for the dead said beside the coffin immediately after the Requiem Mass and before burial." It is basically a song for the dead that the church sings before people are buried. In the requiem *Libera Me*, it says: "When the heavens and earth shall be shaken." This is sung by a baritone soloist who has a really thick voice. With lower instrumental accompaniment such as cello and bass, it sounds very majestic. There are accents on each of the words: "shall be shaken," which sounds serious and terrifying. There is a similar line in Gounod's opera: "His cross will shine in heaven and the whole world will be shattered" (GL, IV, 2)! In the opera, the invisible chorus does not sing as horrific as in the requiem. They just sing together, but in the accompaniment, the middle string voices play scalar running sixteenth notes 4 times which creates a kind of tension in the atmosphere (GS, 275). Maybe Gounod is holding back to foreshadow Marguerite's later salvation in the story. Also, at the end of this scene the invisible chorus sings with Marguerite. It seems like the angels are helping Marguerite to beg mercy from God. It is another allusion to Marguerite's later salvation. In addition, on the bright side, there is a statement in the requiem *Lux Aeternum* similar to Gounod's libretto: "Let everlasting light shine on them, O lord" sung heavenly by a soprano. Her tone is serene and lyric. She is like a messenger from God, who comes to deliver God's mercy. There is a similar statement in Gounod's opera: "May one spark of your light shine down on them" (GL, IV, 3)! Marguerite is also a soprano. She sings with the invisible chorus, but one can mainly hear Marguerite. Her tone is restless, more like a poor woman who is in danger

and desperately begging for mercy from Lord (GS, 281- 283).

In this scene of the opera, Marguerite is more like a victim of Mephistopheles. In the Cathedral, there is no one else except for Mephistopheles who talks to her. She is an unfortunate person under Mephistopheles' pressure and persecution. In contrast, in Goethe's Cathedral scene: "Gretchen, is surrounded by people..." (3775-3776). She is more like a guilty person condemned by society. Her illegitimate pregnancy caused by Faust is contrary to social morality. She is abandoned by the people, society and church. There is no Mephistopheles in the Cathedral scene in Goethe's Faust. Instead of him, there are only the Evil Spirits (maybe they are Marguerite's bad conscience), the Choir and Marguerite herself. She is the cause of all pain and sadness that she suffers. Goethe's Mephistopheles is not like the treacherous character that oppresses Marguerite. Mephistopheles stays out of Marguerite's suffering and he never does anything distinctly bad in Goethe's Faust even though there are events that have an invisible connection to him. I think Gounod wants to emphasize Mephistopheles' power, so he composes this Cathedral scene for Mephistopheles and makes him speak to Marguerite personally. Mephistopheles' image of personified insidiousness is deeply ingrained in the audience. Because compared to Goethe's *Faust*, Mephistopheles is magnified by Gounod, to make his role more impressive to the audience.

In addition, Gounod uses instruments precisely and there is overlap between Gounod's score and Goethe's text, as for instance when "Organ music is heard..." (3799). Gounod uses the organ from where Goethe mentions the organ in his Cathedral scene. There is another overlap with Goethe's Faust: "Feel God's wrath! Hear

the trumpet sound! The graves now tremble” (3800-3803)! Here, the Evil Spirits mention trumpet in Faust and Gounod seems to remember it and adds the trumpet part to the evil Mephistopheles. In order to follow the text where God is furious and the graves are trembling, Mephistopheles states in the opera: “God, at the same time! Hear these clamours! Hell is claiming you” (GL, IV, 2)! It shows that Marguerite is unacceptable to God and Hell is waiting. Furthermore, in Goethe’s Faust, we read: “Marguerite: O to be away from here! The organ seems to take my breath away...” (3808-3810). There is an echo of this in the opera’s libretto “Marguerite: Alas, this pious chant is even more terrifying” (GL, IV, 2)! “Spirit: Go hide! There is no hiding sin and dishonor! Air? Light? Woe to you” (3821-3824)! there is a similar part in the opera when Mephistopheles says: “A curse on you! Hell awaits you” (GL, IV, 3)!

It is curious that some scholars say that Goethe is unmusical, but Gounod is actually following Goethe’s idea.

Conclusion

We can see many differences in the characterization of Mephistopheles among the aforementioned works. In Gounod, we see the differentiation between "good" and "evil" more distinctly as defined by Mephistopheles' lack of dialogue with the Lord during the whole opera. Mephistopheles is an individual power that is as strong as the Lord and his fight for Faust's soul is more like what he always does in his life. As I have mentioned when discussing the Golden Calf song, he seems to have a more distinct personality. He is more arrogant and blasphemous, by singing and referencing the Golden Calf in public hoping to provoke the Lord; he is more evil and showy, because he seduces people more directly by using music and money, which is not like in Goethe and Boito where he only take steps against who provokes him first, and the music only gets sinister when Mephistopheles is in his world. Moreover, he is more powerful because he threatens Marguerite in the Cathedral scene, but in Goethe and Boito he seems to have less power over Marguerite.

In the Prelude of Boito, Mefistofele and the Lord have a dialogue. It shows that they have a relationship, but when we examine further it shows their relationship to be different than in Goethe. Even though Mefistofele is a separate power from the Lord, but his character is closer than Gounod to Goethe, such as the defining of his complexity as a devil who "always willing evil, always produces good" as I've mentioned at the end in reference to Faust's death and his salvation scene. Moreover, he has limitations on Margretha's soul as in Goethe's *Faust*. He has no power over her.

When we mention Mephistopheles' limitations, there are a lot of places showing that within the three works, such as his failing to seduce people at the end of his Golden Calf song; he also never successfully seduced Margarete's brother Valentin, who wants to pick a fight with him. In addition, he failed to seduce Faust by using beautiful women, drink and music in Gounod; in comparison, he is excited by sinister music and dance in Boito. In addition, we also see him try to use music and a devilish dance party in Goethe in the Walpurgis Night scene. Later, we see Faust yearning for Marguerite and desiring to save her from prison, which is a big feat for Mephistopheles that he doesn't want to get involved in at all. These failures present Mephistopheles' limitations, suggesting that seduction can blind people for a while but not for the long term. His seduction can't influence people's faith. There is also the limitation that Mephistopheles can't pass through the holy pentagram on the threshold in Goethe's *Faust*.

After analyzing Mephistopheles in two operas, I found Mephistopheles as a more important figure than Faust. In both operas, Mephistopheles seems to have a lot more power than in Goethe, expressed by his deep and dark voice setting as I mentioned when referencing the Pact scene, or in the Witches' Sabbath scene where he leads Faust to his world, or when he holds the "earth" in his hand and his introduction of it. We also see his importance, as previously mentioned, when witnessing his comparable power to the Lord as seen in the Prelude, along with his obtaining of an instrument as his support in the orchestra, and the danger motif in the Witches' Sabbath scene after he talks to Faust in Gounod as a threatening motif to Faust. When Faust fights with

Valentin, Mephistopheles uses his power to break Valentin's sword, thus helping Faust, as I referenced in the Witches' Sabbath scene. Faust is more like a person who is lead by Mephistopheles influence and remains under his control, making Mephistopheles more like a puppet master. Continuing, I found Mephistopheles' disappearance more intriguing after analyzed these three works. As was aforementioned, as I had only read Goethe's *Faust*, I thought his disappearance is a symbol of his failure on his bet with God over Faust's soul. But after his character impressed me more that at the beginning he is confident, believing there is nothing that can cause him to lose. Then gradually he finds out there is something he can do nothing on it. At the end he loses the bet and disappears without saying a word. It looks like he was overconfident about his power and he arrogantly thinks that the world is boring and humans are stupid and too easy to seduce. It might be because he is the leader of the devils and no one has gone against him for a long time, thus making him cocky. The Lord notices that, and it seems that by having a bet with Mephistopheles on Faust's soul, he actually wants to teach Mephistopheles a lesson that he is not as powerful as he thought and what he thinks is not always right. We see during the opera, the Lord gives Mephistopheles complete freedom to do his work – the Lord does not reprimand Mephistopheles when he does evil things. As a result, Mephistopheles knows his limitation and goes back to his world with his demons in Goethe's *Faust*. In Boito, he looks like he is dying by sinking deeper and deeper into the ground but it also could mean he is going back to his world under the ground. Even though the ending in Gounod ends where Goethe's first part ends, that is with the death of Marguerite, he also disappears after losing Marguerite's soul.

He thought he could get Marguerite's soul by using Faust, whom he has power over, to seduce Marguerite. But he learns his lesson by losing Marguerite's soul and disappears at the end of the opera. Therefore, I think this story, though called Faust, revolves around the protagonist, whom I consider to be Mephistopheles.

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